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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 21, 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHAIRMAN, PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD

Subject: Organization of Psychological Strategy Board

I have been giving consideration to the organization of the Psychological Strategy Board and particularly to the question of whether the directives of April 4, 1951, establishing it should be amended. In addition to the recommendations of the Board's first Director and the recommendations of the Board included in your useful and constructive memorandum of May 16, I have had the report of a study undertaken at my direction by the Director of the Bureau of the Budget.

It is my view that, as you recommend, no change in the directive of April 4, 1951, or in the organization of the Board should be made at this time. The Board's decision to rotate the chairmanship, with the Director taking his turn as presiding officer is consistent with the intent of the directive of April 4, 1951.

Adjustments in the relationships of the Director with the National Security Council and of the Board with the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended in your memorandum similarly can be made within the framework of the existing directive and are consistent with it. I shall speak with the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council relative to the former. Appropriate representation of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with the Board can be arranged by the Secretary of Defense.

I believe that it would be helpful to me if the Board could suggest occasions when I might become more directly informed of its work, particularly of its evaluation of the national psychological effort, through a meeting with the Board, the Director and the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council.

I am transmitting the report of the Director of the Bureau of the Budget on the organization of the Psychological Strategy Board for study and appropriate action by the Board. The report emphasizes the primary usefulness of the Board as an instrument for more effective planning through the organized utilization of the resources of the participating agencies. The report further stresses the need for increased emphasis upon the Board's responsibilities for forward planning and in the evaluation of the total national psychological effort. I particularly commend these sections of the report to the attention of the Board.

S/ HARRY S. TRUMAN

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NSC review(s) completed.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD
SELECTED ASPECTS OF ITS CONCEPT.
ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS

Bureau of the Budget
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THE PSYCHOLOGICAL STRATEGY BOARD
SELECTED ASPECTS OF ITS CONCEPT,
ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS

This report results from a study of the PSB approximately one year after the issuance by the President of a directive establishing it. The study was directed solely toward an appraisal of the concept underlying the framework in which the Board was created and did not undertake a direct appraisal of the efficiency with which the Board or its staff has set about its tasks. The report, therefore, is not a full and fair picture and should be taken as reflecting on no one's performance. It discusses, in very condensed form, only those aspects of the Board's organization, procedures and relationships which have occasioned the more significant differences of view or which appear to be most in need of clarification, alteration, or other particular notice or attention at this time. It reflects consideration of varying proposals for change which have been advanced including those of the Board's first Director.

CONCLUSIONS

Three principal conclusions result:

1. A healthy start has been made.
2. The basic framework provided for in the directive of April 4, 1951, has proven sound in today's situation. No major defects exist which would warrant amending the basic directive though a few minor amendments suggest themselves, should it be determined advisable to amend the directive at a later time.
3. In a number of respects, clarification, alteration, or particular attention or notice to the Board's role, organization, or relationships is desirable. These, however, can be taken, with the approval and direction of the President, within the framework of the existing directive.

DISCUSSION

It should be remembered that while the directive establishing the Board was issued a year ago, it was several months before a Director was on hand. The hesitations and difficulties of the subsequent few months were no greater than those experienced by any new undertaking, especially one so complex and so intimately enmeshed with responsibilities already assigned to other major departments and agencies. Further the Board came into being only after a long period of

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consideration which was characterized by wide difference of views respecting its role, mission, structure, etc. While those differences persist, though less vigorously advocated than before, the Board has been able to accomplish its principal organizational tasks and to complete some needed planning towards specific psychological objectives.

ROLE AND MISSION

During its consideration of proposals for a more vigorous psychological effort, the NSC had been presented with an organizational issue which in fact reflected wide divergency of view in concept and policy. It is natural that these disparate views would reappear as the PSB, with borrowed staff, undertook to get underway.

An examination of the effectiveness of PSB as a mechanism to achieve the President's stated objectives for a more effective national psychological effort and a consideration of proposals for change must be viewed in terms of those differing concepts. It is helpful to condense the presentation of the differing views which have been and, to a degree, are still held by very briefly summarizing the extremes since it is in their extremes that they have tended to influence most greatly the developments which have occurred.

The extreme of one view would picture the Board as the headquarters for the cold war. In this view the Board's concern would embrace any or all of the major policies, programs or activities of the Government. With a thus broad concern the Board would have a matching broad responsibility and authority. It would ensure that psychological considerations were brought to bear in the shaping of all, except purely domestic, national policies and programs and when in its view, the psychological considerations should be the determining ones, would exercise an independence in presenting its view in the top councils of the Government. This concept would require extensive organization, a large group of independent personnel, an independence for its Director and a pattern of relationships with the President and the National Security Council independent of those which its member departments could provide.

At the other extreme was the view that what was intended was merely an expansion or intensification of "psychological operations" then being carried on. It saw the Board as being concerned only with programs specifically identified as psychological operations, such as propaganda and the like, and the Board's concern therefore as the support or implementation through such psychological operations of national objectives, policies and programs developed through other mechanisms without the participation or contribution of the Board. Organizationally, therefore, the Board would provide primarily for

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an elevation of mechanisms already existing to coordinate operations, its staff would be wholly borrowed from operators engaged in the conduct or planning of psychological programs. The Board would provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information, a committee type structure for the coordination of psychological plans. Its Director would serve as a secretary and staff officer of the Board itself and neither he nor the Board would have any pattern of relationships except that provided through its member departments.

Discussion of these differing views consumed a considerable part of the time of the Board and its staff in its first few months. It was not until the Board approached its initial job in terms of problems rather than concept that it was able to come to sufficient agreement to begin its task. Such agreement was easiest in terms of specific and immediate problems which were already in a status of interdepartmental discussion and negotiation.

The Director was conscious of the need to lift the Board's activities to a strategic plane in point of level and to the longer-range problems in point of time. He cautioned against the acceptance of problems of a purely inter-departmental nature to a degree which would adversely affect the Board's capacity to develop its more forward-looking and strategic program. In practice, however, a sufficiently large agenda of currently unsolved problems to consume the efforts of the PSB planning staff and facilities was available from the interdepartmental mechanisms then existing, from the NSC and, in a few cases, from the suggestion of certain officials. The longer-range projects included in the Director's first list of problems have therefore not been pursued with vigor nor supported by the best available PSB or departmental staff.

The resultant tendency to restrict the Board's concern to current problems has affected its program in two other areas as well (1) evaluation and (2) coordination.

It has organized only a limited program in the field of evaluation. While it has been able to complete some specific projects, such as an appraisal of the impact of the disarmament proposals, it has not yet developed plans, techniques, nor staff for full-scale evaluation of the national effort. Yet it is precisely this activity which will fertilize and support a program of anticipatory planning.

Some of the Board's activities in the field of coordination are either of a purely administrative nature or in the area of operational coordination which the directive clearly leaves with the departments. The responsibilities of the member departments for the planning, conduct and coordination of actual operations is not diminished by the President's directive. Each of the departments involved were directed

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to strengthen the existing arrangements within their departments for those purposes and the Secretary of State was authorized to effect such changes in the interdepartmental coordinating mechanisms established under NSC 59/1. The Board should resist the tendency which its existence furthers of utilizing it for the coordination of matters the responsibility for which should rest with the departments.

If the Board is to fulfill the objectives of the President's directive it will be necessary to shift its emphasis to provide for a greater and more adequate scheduling and support of anticipatory forward planning and coordination programs and a more selective approach to the planning and coordination of current or operational matters. It is in this direction, however, that the member agencies are most alert to the possibility of the Board usurping responsibilities, except in the single case of planning for the extremely long-range and tenuous prospect of general hostilities. The Board's role and responsibility for forward strategic planning may thus need to be reaffirmed. The Board thus will need the support of a clarification, or more properly, an iteration, of the forward and strategic aspects of its role under the April 4, 1951 directive.

It is recommended that staff of the Board and that of the contributing member agencies be utilized to give increased emphasis to forward and strategic planning and to the evaluation of the total national psychological effort. The Board should select for planning, coordination or evaluation attention those projects or programs within its field of responsibility under the directive of April 4, 1951, which offer the most fruitful opportunities for returns on the Board's efforts. Such projects or programs should deal with problems of a long-range or forward character to the greatest extent consistent with the demands of the current situation.

It is also recommended that in assuring the coordination of efforts under approved plans, the Board place primary emphasis upon direct coordination by the agencies responsible for action and the review of progress by the Board rather than upon operational coordination by the PSB staff. Periodic or occasional reports by the operating agencies requested by the Board in connection with particular approved plans should be made the basis for such review.

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RELATIONSHIPS

The differing views of the Board's role and mission have played an equally substantial part in the shaping of the Board's external relationships. Recommendations have been made from time to time which would, if adopted, move in the direction of greater independence, either for the Board or its Director, or both. Such a move would run counter to the basic concept of the President's directive, the need for which is not demonstrated by study of the Board's experience. The Board was established as a means of achieving more effective planning, through an organized utilization of the resources of the principal agencies rather than providing for an independent source of staff work and advice to the President.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PRESIDENT

The Director of the Board as well as the Under Secretaries of State and Defense and the Director of Central Intelligence who comprise its membership, are Presidential appointees. Their relationship with the President either as individuals or in their capacities related to the PSB is essentially a matter peculiarly personal to the President. Nevertheless, the desirability has been advanced of affording the President an opportunity to inform himself directly of the views and work of the Board through the assignment to the Director of responsibility for a regularized periodic personal reporting.

It is suggested that, should the President desire to be informed directly of the Board's work and views, he meet, as the need arises, with the Board as a whole, the Director of PSB and the Executive Secretary of the NSC.

RELATIONSHIP WITH NSC

The development of the actual relationship with NSC, as well as current proposals for establishing formally a relationship independent of the member agencies, has to be viewed in terms of the conflicting concepts of the Board's role. These views re-emerged strongly on the occasion when the Board formally considered its relationship with the NSC with the result that a very rigid pattern might well have been determined upon had the Board carried its consideration to the point of a formal statement. It was suggested, for example, that PSB participation in matters potentially or actually before the NSC should be entirely through the member departments.

In actual practice and through informal means a more advantageous relationship has developed. There have been occasions, both at the NSC level, and more frequently at the Senior Staff level, in

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which participation of the Director or staff of PSB has been of advantage. The heads of the departments comprising the PSB may desire the attendance of the Director to interpret the relationship of matters before the NSC to approved objectives and policies of the PSB. This type of participation may be expected to broaden as the Board progresses with its forward and strategic planning. Similarly the work of both the PSB and the Senior Staff will be advantaged by free exchange of information and by the participation of the PSB.

The NSC also has been an important source of activity of the Board through

1. requesting PSB study and advice in connection with proposals before the NSC.

2. the full participation of a PSB adviser to the NSC Senior Staff.

The development of the NSC relationship has therefore been somewhat of a compromise of the two extreme views of the Board's role and, through informal means, has served to temper the rigidity of relationship envisioned by one school of thought in the Board's early stages.

The formalization of the relationships of the Board, and especially its Director, with the NSC, would involve a careful balancing of a number of important relationships. It should be an unusual situation in which the Director would wish to make a presentation of the Board's views or to speak for the Board prior to the formal approval by the Board itself. Such approval involves a consideration within the departments of the special area of PSB's concern in relation to the broader concerns of the same departments in their NSC capacity. The obvious intent of having provided for a Board structure for PSB is to insure this correlation and, if necessary, subordination, of psychological considerations with broader considerations of high military or foreign policy and with operational feasibility. Each member is on the Board for some aspect of that purpose. To provide formally therefore for an independent representation in the NSC for the PSB would involve a departure from the concept of PSB expressed in the President's directive, the necessity for which is not yet demonstrated. The development of these relationships, therefore, should continue as at present.

The President's directive, however, prescribes one relationship of PSB to the NSC which has not been fully developed. The directive requires the PSB to make reports to the NSC on its evaluation of the national psychological effort and on the implementation by the departments and agencies concerned of the approved policies and programs.

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of the Board. An adequate program has not yet been developed for carrying this out. The importance of such a program to the role of the Board has already been discussed. It is equally important to the relationship of NSC and PSB. Adequate reports of this type would afford the best method for ensuring the meshing of psychological considerations with the broadest considerations at top planning levels. It would do so, further, without violence to the carefully balanced relationships of the member agencies to the PSB and to the NSC.

It is recommended that the relationships of the Board or its Director with the NSC not be formalized but remain as at present. The Board, however, should take steps to develop a system of reports to the NSC as required by the President's directive.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE JCS

The President's directive provides that a representative of the Joint Chiefs of Staff sit with the Board in order that the Board may relate its planning to approved plans for military operations. In actual practice the relationships of the Board and the JCS have developed so that the Board obtains the Joint Chiefs of Staff's views on Board proposals rather than their advice on approved military operations.

The collegiate nature of the JCS organization requires that their views be obtained formally through the submission of specific proposals. This procedure forestalls negotiation and advice and representatives of the JCS have generally been able only to state, not negotiate, the JCS views. The Board has been able to relieve this difficulty somewhat by informal contact through the Joint Staff and on occasion through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

These difficulties may have been a factor in the proposal that the President designate the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff as the representative referred to in the President's directive. The more important aspect of that proposal, however, concerns its relationship to the concept of the Board as an independent group.

As in the case of the NSC, the relationships of the PSB to the JCS involve careful balancing of a number of other important relationships including that of the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense with the JCS. Some of the members of PSB would view the formal designation of the Chairman of the JCS as a participant in PSB matters as moving further than is necessary or desirable towards an independence for PSB. There is the further view that the proposal would not necessarily solve the difficulties of securing expeditiously the advice of the JCS.

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It is recommended that action not be taken towards directing that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff serve as the representative of the JCS with the PSB envisioned in the directive of April 4, 1951, but that the Board continue to develop its relationships with the JCS as at present.

THE BOARD, CHAIRMAN AND DIRECTOR

The directive establishing the PSB places the responsibilities assigned in the Board. It, however, provides for a Presidentially appointed Director, provides that he direct all activities under the Board, and gives him freedom to organize the staff and its work, including staff detailed as well as assigned. The obvious intent is to create a Director capable of proceeding to carry out responsibilities assigned to the Board as a whole while at the same time retaining ultimate control in the Board. The Board as a whole as well as in their individual capacities represent the major departments whose activities the PSB will most vitally affect and are thus in a position to insure that psychological considerations of proposed policy and program are related to the broader considerations of foreign and military policy and program on the one hand and firm intelligence estimates and operating feasibility on the other. Each member of the Board may be viewed as present primarily for one of these purposes.

It is natural that during the early stages of the Board's existence it might wish to exercise a closer review and approval over details particularly of structure, procedures and work priorities than would be either consistent with the broader intent of the Board's own role or necessary or desirable after the Director and his staff have shaped a more continuing program. Sufficient progress has been made to indicate the wisdom of effecting several adjustments in the concepts and procedures of the Board, which through a process of evolution would place on the Director a greater freedom of action and greater responsibility for the direction of the Board's activities while retaining ultimate control over the vital substantive decisions.

It is recommended that the Board begin a progressive delegation to the Director to direct the activities of the Board and to act and speak for the Board on matters which the Board has approved. Such delegation should include a greater utilization of the Director in the manner prescribed by the President's directive in organizing the business of the Board itself including expediting the reaching of decisions.

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The President's directive provides that the Board select a Chairman but prescribes no duties. The practice of the Board initially to handle formally many matters for which it can now begin to rely upon the Director has given the position of Chairman a significance beyond that intended by the directive with a consequent diminution of the role of the Director.

This has lead to the suggestion that the President now designate the Director as Chairman. Had this been recommended at the time the directive was issued and had the role of Chairman as essentially presiding officer been more directly defined, a perhaps clearer relationship as among the Board, Chairman and Director might have evolved. The significance which the role of Chairman has acquired, however, would now lend a significance to the designation of the Director as Chairman not in accord with the concept of the Board's role. An alternative which would clarify the relationship and minimize any future potential difficulty is that suggested above, namely a progressive withdrawal from operating detail accompanied by a greater reliance on the Director to organize the staff and activities under the Board and the work of the Board itself. As evidence of the thus reduced significance of the position of Chairman, the Board should adopt a practice of rotating the Chairman.

It is recommended that the Board adopt the practice of rotating the assignment to this position and that it press a program to implement the preceding recommendation relating to a progressively greater reliance on the Director for the smooth functioning of the Board itself.

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

The Board has considered on a number of occasions the question of its membership with the conclusion that no additional members are needed or desirable. On one occasion the Board expressed the view that the President's directive did not intend any additional permanent members.

This point of view of the Board has not prevented it from including in its formal meetings a wide selection of officials of other agencies. Further at staff levels, the Board has made extensive use of assistance from an even broader groups.

The range of the Board's concern covers on occasion more agencies than are now members. The list of those which would have some interest in or contribution to make to specific matters before the Board would include a large number of additional agencies. If

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the principal purpose of the Board itself, however, is viewed as providing for the correlation of psychological considerations with other considerations of the broadest and most important character the list narrows.

The importance of the Mutual Security Program to the national psychological effort and the important resources that the Mutual Security Agency can provide have lead to the proposal that this program be represented on the Board either through the Director of Mutual Security or his deputy in the Mutual Security Agency.

The placing of less emphasis by the Board upon the use of the PSB as a coordinating body on day-to-day matters as recommended in this report would appear to reduce the need for enlarged permanent membership through the participation as at present of a number of agencies from time to time will continue to be desirable and necessary.

The addition of the Director of Mutual Security to permanent membership would tend to make it more difficult to prevent the addition of other agencies. One of the strengths of the present arrangement is the reasonably coequal concern of each member of the Board and the fact that collectively they provide the principal resources in staff necessary to the Board's work. They are, in addition, the principal agencies responsible for extensive psychological operations.

The present relationships between the PSB and the NSC would become more difficult in adding to PSB membership. The DMS as a member of the NSC will continue to participate on the broad policy decisions in the psychological field which are discussed at that level.

There should continue to be close working relationships with the Director of Mutual Security and he should be kept fully informed of the Board's activities and participate informally at such times as, in the Board's judgment, such participation is beneficial at the strategic planning level.

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It is recommended that the permanent membership of the Board not be expanded at this time but that the Board continue to utilize the provisions of the directive for augmented membership from time to time to insure the broadest contribution in its work.

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REMARKS: Please note Director's note: "Mr. Wisner
To note".

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